



Newsletter #3 –Spring 2007

Planning Team Develops Preliminary Draft Management Alternatives

Message from the Superintendent

Dear Friends

Fort Pulaski National Monument is seeking public comments and suggestions on four preliminary management concepts for long-term resource protection and visitor services at the historic site.

These alternatives are not final. They are being made available to our partners, neighbors and stakeholders so that the National Park Service (NPS) can benefit from your review and comment prior to the development and distribution of the draft General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement.

*Please tell us what you think. Use the enclosed response card to provide us with your comments. No postage is necessary. Simply fold and staple or tape closed the completed card and drop it in a mailbox. We would appreciate your comments by **July 1, 2007** to be considered in this phase of the planning project.*

There will be additional opportunities to comment on the alternatives later in the planning process. Your comments on these “preliminary” management alternatives will help us revise them for the draft GMP/EIS that will be made available to the public and distributed for additional review and comment. We look forward to hearing from you.

Charlie Fenwick



Demonstration of 30-pounder Parrot gun on Fort Pulaski parade ground.

About Fort Pulaski

Fort Pulaski National Monument is located between Savannah and Tybee Island on the Georgia coast. The site contains 5,365 acres on Cockspur and McQueens Islands. Within this insular setting, the monument contains a broad range of significant historic and natural resources.

Fort Pulaski is a well-preserved, massive, brick fortification considered invincible when it was built in the first half of the 19th century. It was one unit in a protective chain of forts planned and built to protect the eastern seaboard cities after the British burned the city of Washington during the War of 1812. The bombardment of Fort Pulaski by rifled cannons during the Civil War resulted in the breach of its “invincible” walls and the surrender of its garrison to

Union forces. The success of the bombardment proved that masonry forts could no longer provide an effective deterrent to a coastal assault.

Other historic resources include the John Wesley Memorial, dikes, ditches, and tidal gates built under the direction of Lt. Robert E. Lee; the Cockspur Island Lighthouse; Civil War era mortar batteries; demilune gun emplacements; Battery Hambright, a Spanish-American War gun emplacement; and the artifacts and documents in the monument’s collections and files.

The vast majority of the land comprising Fort Pulaski National Monument consists of nearly 5,000 acres of salt marsh. These tidal marshes, which are formed in conjunction with barrier island development, have delicate ecological characteristics including essential life support systems for shrimp, oysters, juvenile fish and shellfish.

Since its appearance has changed little in the last 150 years, the marsh provides the visitor with a historic scene that greatly enhances the appreciation of the fort and the significance of its location as a coastal defense.

PARK PURPOSE

Park purpose statements are based on the specific legislation and associated legislative history for each park. Fort Pulaski National Monument is a public park for the benefit and enjoyment of the people. The purposes of Fort Pulaski National Monument include:

- Preserve and protect the 19th century masonry fort and its associated structures and interpret its roles in coastal fortifications, military technology and the Civil War;
- Preserve and protect other military structures, other government structures, and archaeological resources associated with various military developments and fortifications on Cockspur Island;
- Preserve and protect approximately 5,000 acres of nearly pristine salt marsh on McQueens and Cockspur Islands that constitute the largest portion of the national monument and interpret this important coastal ecology for the education, inspiration, and enjoyment of the visitor.

PARK SIGNIFICANCE

Park significance statements place each park within its current regional, national, and international context. They provide a means to recognize important resources or characteristics that were perhaps not recognized at the time of establishment. Significance statements also identify the resources and values that the NPS is entrusted with managing and protecting. They express the importance of Fort Pulaski National Monument to our natural and cultural heritage. They also provide

important direction for park resource management and preservation in accomplishing the park's purpose.

- It is the site where rifled cannons first successfully breached masonry fortifications, forcing a hasty surrender of the fort and the closure of the port of Savannah, and signaled the end of such fortifications for coastal defenses.



Exterior wall of Fort Pulaski still shows results of April 1862 bombardment.

- Fort Pulaski is the site of Robert E. Lee's first assignment following his commission from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point.
- It is the site of John Wesley's (the founder of Methodism) first sermon in the New World.
- It is the site where General David Hunter, commander of the Department of the South, captured Fort Pulaski and within less than one month issued 2 General Orders freeing slaves first on Cockspur Island and later throughout Georgia, Florida, and South Carolina. President Lincoln later rescinded these orders but ultimately issued his own emancipation proclamation on January 1, 1863 probably having been influenced at least partially by General Hunter.
- The National Monument contains one of the largest federally protected salt marsh environments in the United States.
- Fort Pulaski National Monument is one of the most well preserved examples of "third

system" masonry coastal fortifications on the Southeast coast.

The Planning Process

The Fort Pulaski GMP team has completed the initial scoping phase of the planning process. We met with federal agencies, state and local agencies, and a variety of partners, stakeholders, and other interested parties. The result was a wide-ranging list of concerns and suggestions for NPS to consider in developing the GMP.

The GMP Team received approximately 70 comments and suggestions during scoping. Many of the comments and suggestions fell into the following four categories:

- **Interpretation** – The team received suggestions for including and expanding the interpretation



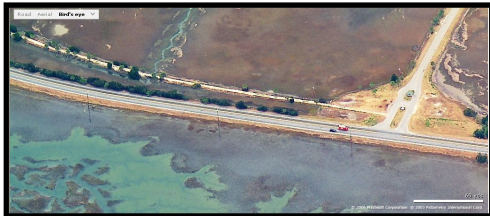
March Haynes leading former slaves to freedom at Fort Pulaski. Painting by Martin Pate.

of African American experiences at Fort Pulaski. Other contributors noted the growth in ecotourism and natural history interpretation and recommended increasing programs in these areas. The military history of the fort and its connection to the larger military history of Savannah was also a theme recommended for the park's interpretive program.

- **Boundary expansion** – The protection and possible acquisition of federal batteries was a common element in this category.
- **Highway 80 widening** – Meeting participants emphasized both the need for participation in project planning to protect the park's re-

sources and realization of opportunities to benefit Fort Pulaski through improved access, safety, vehicle pull-offs, and terrapin exclusion devices.

- **Wetlands/Marsh** – The vast salt marsh on the south side of Highway 80 evoked several comments from our partners



Highway 80 at the Fort Pulaski entrance.

and stakeholders. The identification and delineation of wetland boundaries was one focus. Another theme was the need to protect water quality and biodiversity in the salt marsh ecosystem.

Wilderness Study

It is the policy of the NPS to evaluate all of its lands for eligibility to be included within the national wilderness preservation system. For those lands that possess wilderness characteristics, NPS will manage them according to the requirements of the Wilderness Act unless and until Congress and the President take final action to remove the lands from the National Wilderness System.

During the formulation of the preliminary GMP alternatives that are described later in this newsletter, the planning team discussed the 5,000 acre salt marsh that comprises the McQueens Island section of the National Monument. Most of this area retains its primeval character and remains largely untouched by human hands or influence. It is only accessible by water and its marshy nature makes it nearly impossible for humans to walk on its surface.

The importance of this marsh to our natural resources is high and will continue to grow as fisheries and bird habitat become more threatened. The aesthetic value is also high as it provides an unspoiled scenic vista that is nearly impossible to obtain in the city of Savannah and beyond.

Therefore the NPS, as part of this GMP process, will conduct a formal wilderness assessment and study which concludes with a recommendation to Congress. An official announcement of this study will be published in the Federal Register and the public will be invited to comment



Coastal salt marsh

at the various stages of the study.

Management Zoning

Management zoning is the method used by the NPS to identify and describe the appropriate variety of resource conditions and visitor experiences to be achieved and maintained in the different areas of a park. Each management zone has a corresponding description outlining the goals for the desired conditions of natural resources, cultural resources, and visitor experiences of that zone. The management zones also establish the range and levels of management, access, development, and visitor services appropriate in achieving those goals. Management zones guide short- term operations and long- term decision making. They inform managers, visitors, neighboring landowners, and communities on how different areas of the national monument will generally be managed.

The planning team developed five management zones for the national

monument. These zones were applied to the areas within the park boundary in different configurations corresponding to the emphasis of the preliminary management alternatives. The zones are generally described below with more details in the table on the following page. On the maps for each alternative the zones appear in different colors corresponding to the colored bar under the name of each zone below.

Visitor Services Zone

Areas with a high level of visitor access and activity and a primary focus on visitor orientation and education.

Administrative Services Zone

Areas with administrative offices, maintenance facilities and park operations.

Cultural Resources Zone

Areas managed for preserving historic integrity while providing for appropriate visitor use.

Natural Resource Preservation Zone

Areas with minimal development that display the forces of nature and natural resources while protecting and preserving cultural resources.

Recreation Zone

Areas that provide opportunities for recreation through specialized facilities or structures such as trails, parking areas, fishing piers, boat ramps, and comfort stations.

Summary of Management Zones

("X" in box indicates facility or activity is appropriate for that zone.)

| | VISITOR SERVICES ZONE | PARK SERVICES ZONE | CULTURAL RESOURCES ZONE | NATURAL RESOURCE PRESERVATION ZONE | RECREATION ZONE |
|---|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|---|--------------------|
| TYPES OF FACILITIES | | | | | |
| Administrative Office Buildings | X | X | | | |
| Collections Storage Buildings | X | X | | | X |
| Benches | X | X | X | X | X |
| Bike Racks | X | X | | X | X |
| Boardwalks | | | X | X | X |
| Boat Docks | X | X | | | X |
| Comfort Station (restrooms) | X | X | X | | X |
| Concession Facilities | X | X | | | X |
| Hiking Trails | | | | X | X |
| Mountain Bike Trails | X | | | X | X |
| Developed Campgrounds | X | | | | X |
| Fishing Piers | X | | | | X |
| Group Shelters | X | | | | X |
| Maintenance Buildings | | X | | | |
| Paved Parking Areas | X | X | | | X |
| Picnic Pavilions | X | | | | X |
| Picnic Tables | X | | | | X |
| Primitive Campgrounds | X | | X | | X |
| Sidewalks | X | X | | | X |
| Trails | X | | | X | X |
| Visitor Centers | X | X | | | |
| Wayside Exhibits | X | X | X | X | X |
| VISITOR ACTIVITIES | | | | | |
| Backpacking | X | | | | X |
| Camping | X | | | | X |
| Cycling | X | X | | | X |
| Dog walking | X | X | X | X | X |
| Fishing | X | X | X | X | X |
| Group Interpretation | X | | X | X | X |
| Guided tours | X | | X | X | X |
| Hiking – day | X | X | | X | X |
| Kite Flying | X | | | | X |
| Mountain biking | X | | | X | |
| Nature viewing | X | X | X | X | X |
| ORV | | | | | |
| Park orientation | X | X | X | X | X |
| Photography | X | X | X | X | X |
| Picnicking (with facilities – tables or shelters) | X | | | X | X |
| Skateboarding | X | | | | X |
| Running | X | X | X | X | X |
| Scientific or archeological research (by permit) | X | X | X | X | X |
| Sunbathing | X | | | X | X |
| Swimming | | | | | |
| Viewing cultural resources | X | X | X | X | X |
| Viewing programs | X | X | X | X | X |
| Walking | X | X | X | X | X |

Alternative A

General Theme

Continue current management policies and practices. There is no application of the zones in the no action alternative. This alternative is generally used as a way to evaluate the effects of the other alternatives and is also useful in understanding why the NPS or the public may believe that changes are necessary.

Visitor Experience

- The visitor would continue to be oriented to the site through exhibits and a film at the Mission 66 visitor center located near the fort.
- Individual exploration and discovery would characterize most visitors' experiences in the fort and at other locations within the national monument supplemented by regularly scheduled ranger led tours and interpretive talks.

Resource Conditions

- Continue current level of monitoring and protection of the salt marshes of McQueens Island and other wetlands of the national monument.
- Preserve and protect Fort Pulaski and the other cultural resources of the national monument according to current applicable laws, policies, standards and guidelines.
- Maintain current administrative uses of Fort Pulaski casemates such as ranger offices, restrooms, and artifact storage.
- Work with state and local government agencies to avoid or mitigate adverse impacts to natural and cultural resources of the national monument from the Highway 80 project and the Savannah Harbor project.



In this alternative interpretive talks (left) would supplement individual exploration and discovery and the existing visitor parking lot (right) would remain in its current location.

Boundary Revisions

- Maintain current boundary except for possible changes due to Highway 80 expansion. This will be true for all alternatives.

Trails

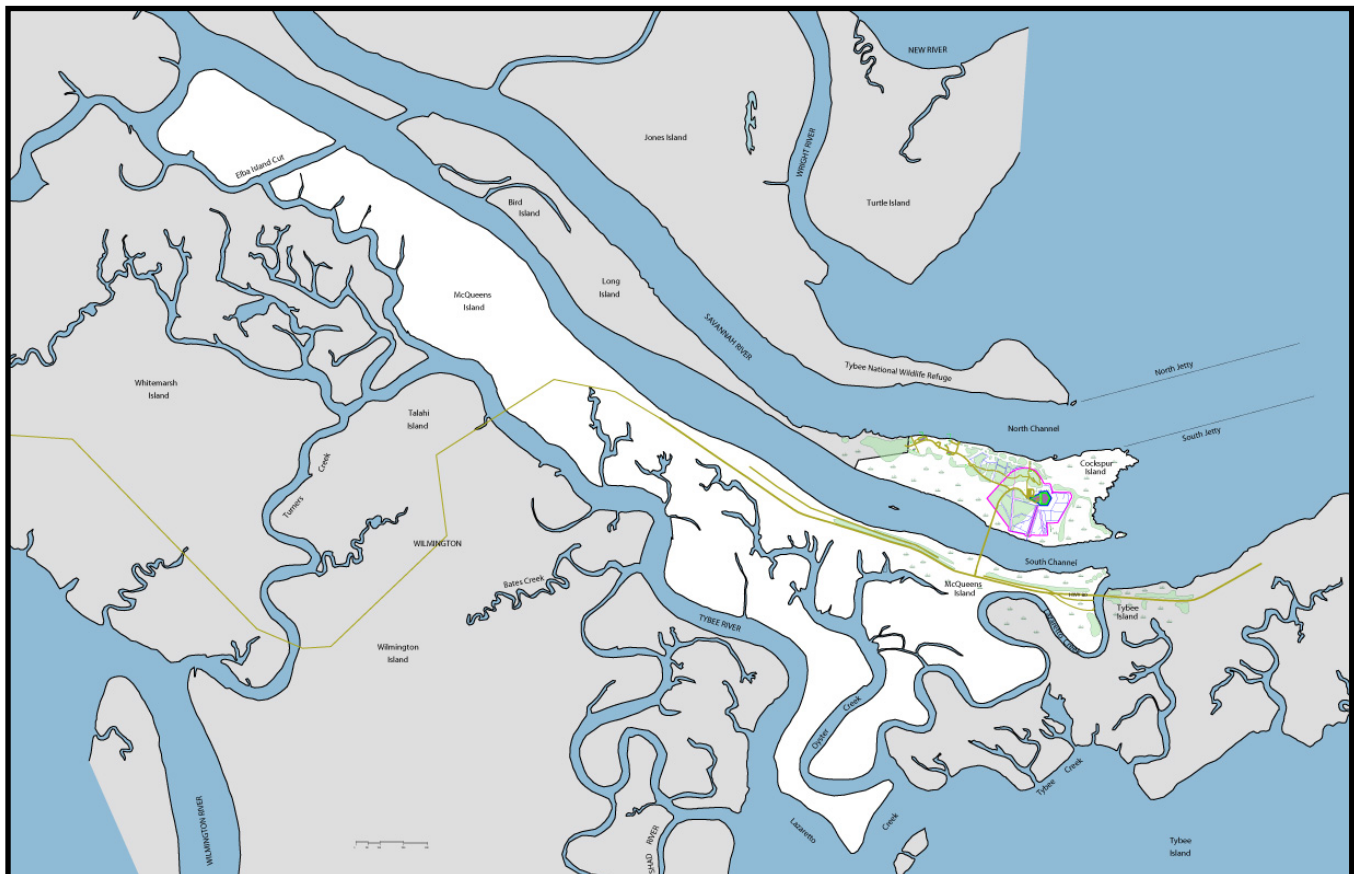
- Maintain existing trails. No new trails.

Interpretation

- Continue current themes and programs.

Access

- Visitors continue to access the fort through the adjacent Visitor Center, paved walkways, and large parking lot.



Alternative B

General Theme

This alternative emphasizes to a high degree the restoration and preservation of historic landscapes and views associated with the principal historic period of Fort Pulaski.



In this alternative, restoration and preservation of historic landscapes and viewsheds would be the primary objective.

Visitor Experience

- Visitors continue to be oriented to the site through exhibits and a film at the visitor center located near the fort.
- Individual exploration and discovery would characterize most visitors' experience in the fort and at other locations within the national monument.
- Enhance visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's significance by restoring most historic site conditions and views.

Resource Conditions

- Tidal salt marshes and other wetlands: no change from current management.
- Uplands: remove or thin some trees and other vegetation to restore historic views.
- Relocate the artifacts storage facility from the fort to higher ground inside or outside the park boundary and restore the casemate to historic conditions.
- Work with state and local government agencies to avoid or mitigate adverse impacts to natural and cultural resources of Fort Pulaski from the Highway 80 project and the Savannah Harbor project.

Federal Batteries

- Continue to work with public and private partners to commemorate and interpret Federal batteries at a site on Tybee Island a short distance south of the Lazaretto Creek Bridge.

Trails

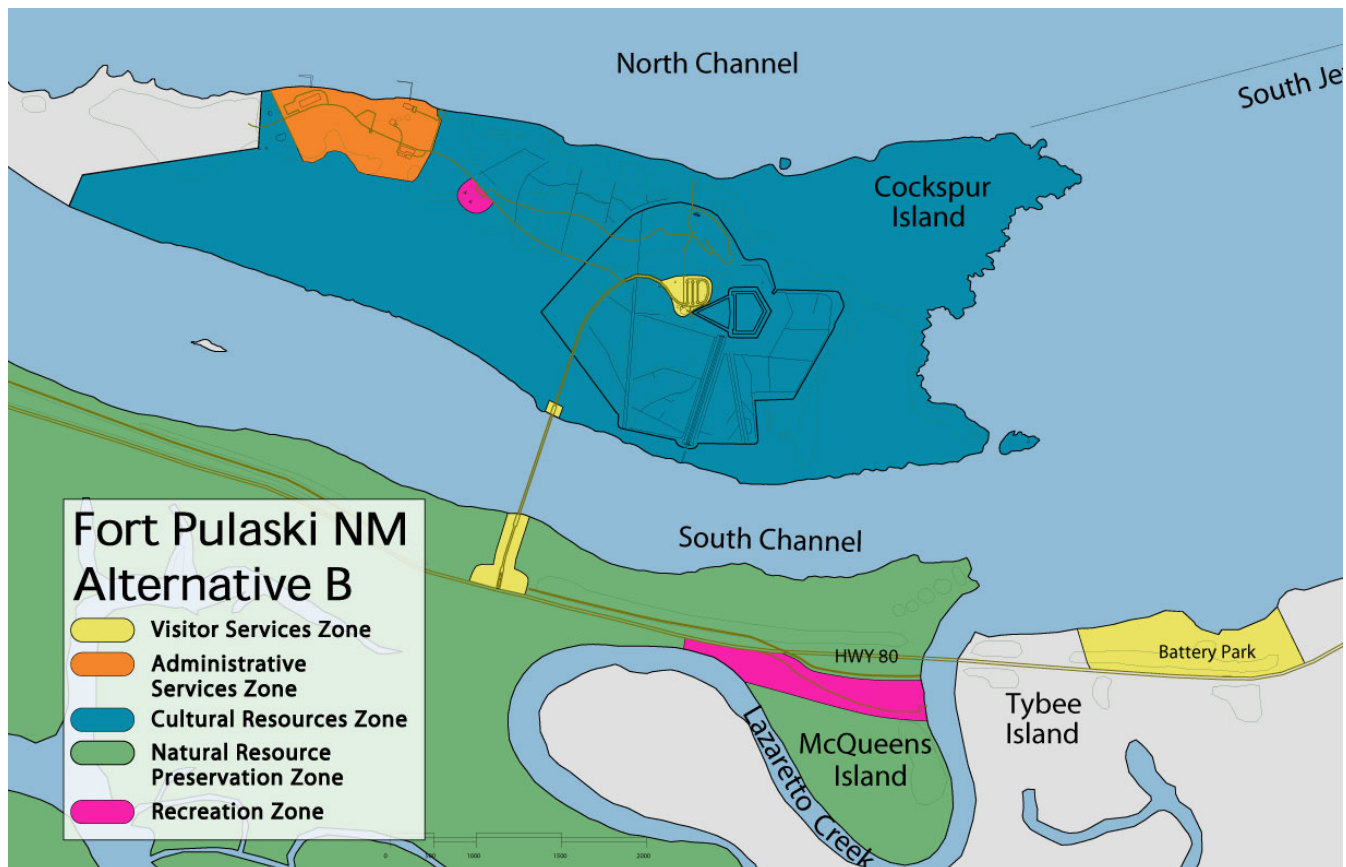
- Maintain existing trails. No new trails.

Interpretation

- Improved views and other physical site changes enhance interpretation of the siege and surrender of the fort and its setting in the period of significance (April 1862).

Access

- Access for recreational activities such as fishing and boating would be maintained at current levels.



Alternative C

General Theme

Expand interpretation for both cultural and natural resource themes, as well as those outside the period of the siege and reduction of Fort Pulaski. Expand appropriate recreational opportunities and facilities within the park.



In this alternative the trail system (left) would be expanded as well as additional canoe and kayak launching facilities at Lazaretto Creek (right).

Visitor Experience

- Visitors continue to be oriented to the site through exhibits and a film at the Mission 66 visitor center located near the fort.
- Expand recreational access by developing a boat launch ramp, dock, and fishing pier on the north shore of Cockspur Island.
- Expand canoe and kayak launching facilities at Lazaretto Creek.

Resource Conditions

- Tidal salt marshes and other wetlands: no change from current management.
- Uplands: limited (less than alternative B) removal and thinning of vegetation to restore sight lines to Federal batteries.
- Remove Bally Building (museum collection storage) from the fort and relocate to higher ground. Restore the casemate to historic conditions or use for interpretive purposes.
- Stabilize the Tybee Knoll lighthouse oil shed.
- Work with state and local government agencies to avoid or mitigate adverse impacts to natural and cultural resources of the national monument from the Highway 80 project and the Savannah Harbor project.

Trails

- Expand trail system at west end of Cockspur Island.

Boundary Revisions

- Maintain current boundary except for possible changes due to Highway 80 expansion.

Potential Acquisitions

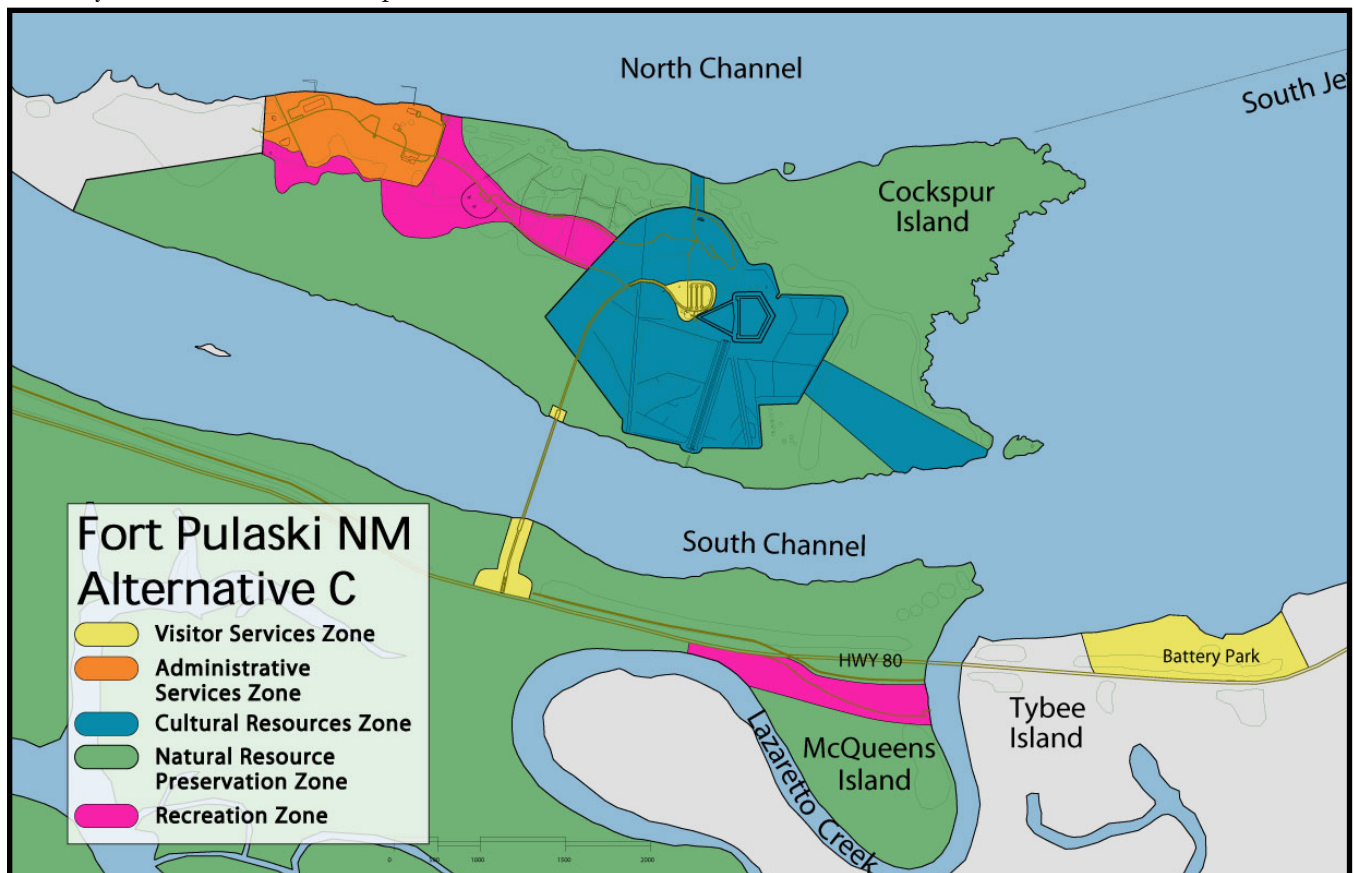
- Seek opportunities to include Federal batteries on Tybee Island that are within the boundary by donation.

Interpretation

- Interpretation of the siege and reduction of Fort Pulaski would be improved due to clearing of vegetation from the sight lines between the fort and the batteries near Goat Point on Tybee Island.
- Expanded recreational access would create additional opportunities for interpreting the natural resources of Fort Pulaski, particularly the tidal salt marshes.

Access

- Provide access to the proposed boat ramp, dock, and fishing pier on the north shore of Cockspur Island.



Alternative D

General Theme

Most ambitious restoration of historic landscape by including relocation of visitor parking lot to an area near the visitor center but outside the view from the top of the fort. An approved Cultural Landscape Report would guide the landscape restoration. Otherwise this alternative is identical to B.



This alternative would relocate the parking lot (left) to an area near the visitor center but out of the view from the top of the fort and restore portions of the landscape (right) to historic conditions.

Visitor Experience

- Visitors continue to be oriented to the site through exhibits and a film at the visitor center located near the fort.
- Individual exploration and discovery would characterize most visitors' experience in the fort and at other locations within the national monument.
- Enhance visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's significance by restoring most historic site conditions and views.

Resource Conditions

- Tidal salt marshes and other wetlands: no change from current management.
- Uplands: remove or thin some trees and other vegetation to restore historic views.
- Relocate the artifacts storage facility from the fort to higher ground inside or outside the park boundary and restore the casemate to historic conditions.
- Work with state and local government agencies to avoid or mitigate adverse impacts to natural and cultural resources of Fort Pulaski from the Highway 80 project and the Savannah Harbor project.

Parking Lot

- Relocate parking lot to a site screened from view of the fort.

Federal Batteries

- Continue to work with public and private partners to commemorate and interpret Federal batteries at a site on Tybee Island a short distance south of the Lazaretto Creek Bridge.

Trails

- Maintain existing trails. No new trails.

Interpretation

- Improved views and other physical site changes enhance interpretation of the siege and surrender of the fort and its setting in the period of significance (April 1862).

Access

- Access for recreational activities such as fishing and boating would be maintained at current levels.

